Dallas, Texas

December 17, 1963

MEMORANDUM OF INTERVIEW

Informal memorandum furnished by Postal Inspector H. D. Holmes, Dallas, Texas, of an interview he took part in with Lee H. Oswald on Sunday morning, November 24, 1963, between the approximate hours of 9:25 a.m. to 11:10 a.m. Those present, in addition to Inspector Holmes, were Captain Will Fritz, Dallas Police, Forrest V. Sorrels, Local Agent in Charge, Secret Service, and Thomas J. Kelly, Inspector, Secret Service. In addition, there were three Detectives who were apparently assigned to guarding Oswald as none of them took part in the interrogation.

Oswald at no time appeared confused or in doubt as to whether or not he should answer a question. On the contrary, he was quite alert and showed no hesitancy in answering those questions which he wanted to answer, and was quite skillful in parrying those questions which he did not want to answer. I got the impression that he had disciplined his mind and reflexes to a state where I personally doubted if he would ever have confessed. He denied, emphatically, having taken part in or having had any knowledge of the shooting of the policeman Tippitt or of the President, stating that so far as he is concerned the reason he was in custody was because he "popped a policeman in the nose in a theater on Jefferson Avenue."

P. O. BOXES---He was questioned separately about the three boxes he had rented, and in each instance his answers were quick, direct and accurate as reflected on the box rental applications. He stated without prompting that he had rented Box 2915 at the Main Post Office for several months prior to his going to New Orleans, that this box was rented in his own name, Lee H. Oswald, and that he had taken out two keys to the box, and that when he had closed the box, he directed that his mail be forwarded to him at his street address in New Orleans.

He stated that no one received mail in this box other than himself, nor did he receive any mail under any other name than his own true name; that no one had access to the box other than himself nor did he permit anyone else to use this box. He stated it was possible that on rare occasions he may have handed one of the keys to his wife to go get his mail but certainly nobody else. He denied emphatically that he ever ordered a rifle under his name or any other name, nor permitted anyone else to order a rifle to be received in this box. Further, he denied that he had ever ordered any rifle by mail order or bought any money order for the purpose of paying for such a rifle. In fact, he claimed he owned no rifle and had not practiced or shot a rifle other than possibly a .22, small bore rifle, since his days with the Marine Corp. He stated that "How could I afford to order a rifle on my salary of $1.25 an hour when I can't hardly feed myself on what I make."

(... RETAINED AT FTW HQ)

When asked if he had a post office box in New Orleans he stated that he did, for the reason that he subscribed to several publications, at least two of which were published in Russia, one being the hometown paper published in Minsk where he met and married his wife, and that he moved around so much that it was more practical to simply rent post office boxes and have his mail forwarded from one box to the next rather than going through the process of furnishing changes of address to the publishers. When asked if he permitted anyone other than himself to get mail in box 30061 at New Orleans, he stated that he did not. It will be recalled that on this box rent application he showed that both Marina Oswald and A. J. Hidell were listed under the caption "Persons entitled to receive mail through box". After denying that anyone else was permitted to get mail in the box, he was reminded that this application showed the name Marina Oswald as being entitled to receive mail in the box and he replied "well so what, she was my wife and I see nothing wrong with that, and it could very well be that I did place her name on the application". He was then reminded that the application also showed the name A. J. Hidell was also entitled to receive mail in the box, at which he simply shrugged his shoulders and stated "I don't recall anything about that".

He stated that when he came back to Dallas and after he had gone to work for the Texas School Book Depository, he had rented a box at the nearby Terminal Annex postal station, this being Box 6225, and that this box was also rented in his name, Lee H. Oswald. He stated he had only checked out one key for this box, which information was found to be accurate, and this key was found on his person at the time of his arrest. He professed not to recall the fact that he showed on the box rental application under name of corporation "Fair Play For Cuba Committee" and "American Civil Liberties Union". When asked as to why he showed these organizations on the application, he simply shrugged and said that he didn't recall showing them. When asked if he paid the box rental fee or did the organizations pay it, he stated that he paid it. In answer to another question, he also stated that no one had any knowledge that he had this box other than himself.

ORGANIZATIONS- MEMBERSHIP IN --- With respect to American Civil Liberties Union he was a little evasive stating something to the effect that he had made some effort to join but it was never made clear whether he had or had not been accepted. He stated that he first became interested in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, after he went to New Orleans, that it started out as being a group of individuals who, like him, who thought and had like political opinions. They did decide to organize, and did organize after a fashion, but denied that they had any president or any elected officers. He stated that he, himself, could probably be considered the secretary since he wrote some letters on their behalf and attempted to collect dues which, if I recall, were $1.00 per month. He also stated that there was a "Fair Play for Cuba Committee" in New York which was better organized. He denied that he was sent to Dallas for the purpose of organizing such a cell in Dallas.

When asked if he was a communist, he stated emphatically not, that he was a Marxist. Someone asked the difference and he stated that a communist is a Lenin-Marxist, that he himself was a pure Marxist, and when someone asked the difference, he stated that it was a long story and if they didn't know, it would take too long to tell them. He stated further that he had read about everything written by or about Karl Marx.

When asked as to his religion, he stated that Karl Marx was his religion, and in response to further questioning he stated that some people may find the Bible interesting reading, but it was not for him, stating further that even as a philosophy there was not much to the Bible.

MARINE CORP SERVICE---Captain Fritz made some mention of his dishonorable discharge from the Marine Corp at which point he bristled noticeably, stating that he had been discharged with an "honorable" discharge and that this was later changed due to his having attempted to denounce his American Citizenship while he was living in Russia. He stated further that since his change of citizenship did not come to pass, he had written a letter to Mr. Connally, then Secretary of the Navy, and after considerable delay, received a very respectful reply wherein Connally stated he had resigned to run for Governor of Texas, and that his letter was being referred to the new Secretary, a Mr. Cork, Kurth, or something like that. He showed no particular animosity toward Mr. Connally while discussing this feature.

MAP---Captain Fritz advised him that among his effects in his room, there was found a map of the City of Dallas that had some marks on it and asked him to explain this map. Oswald said he presumed he had reference to an old City map which he had on which he had made some X's denoting location of firms that had advertised job vacancies. He stated that he had no transportation and either walked or rode a bus and that as he was constantly looking for work, in fact had registered for employment at the Texas Employment Bureau, and that as he would receive leads either from newspaper ads or from the Bureau or from neighbors, he would chart these places on the map to save time in his traveling. He said to the best of his recollection, most of them were out Industrial, presumably meaning Industrial Blvd. When asked as to why the X at the location of the Texas School Book Depository at Elm and Houston, he stated that "Well, I interviewed there for a job, in fact, got the job, therefore the X".

When asked as to how he learned about this vacancy, he stated that "Oh, it was general information in the neighborhood, I don't recall just who told me about it, but I learned it from people in Mrs. Paynes' neighborhood" and that all the people around there were looking out for possible employment for him.

ACTIVITY JUST PRIOR TO AND IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT---To an inquiry as to why he went to visit his wife on Thursday night, November 21, whereas he normally visited her over the weekend, he stated that on this particular weekend he had learned that his wife and Mrs. Payne were giving a party for the children and that they were having in a "houseful" of neighborhood children and that he just didn't want to be around at such a time. Therefore, he made his weekly visit on Thursday night.

When asked if he didn't bring a sack with him the next morning to work, he stated that he did, and when asked as to the contents of the sack, he stated that it contained his lunch. Then, when asked as to the size or shape of the sack, he said "Oh, I don't recall, it may have a small sack or a large sack, you don't always find one that just fits your sandwiches." When asked as to where he placed the sack when he got in the car, he said in his lap, or possibly the front seat beside him, as he always did because he didn't want to get it crushed. He denied that he placed any package in the back seat. When advised that the driver stated that he had brought out a long parcel and placed it in the back seat, he stated "Oh, he must be mistaken or else thinking about some other time when he picked me up."

When asked as to his whereabouts at the time of the shooting, he stated that when lunch time came, and he didn't say which floor he was on, he said one of the Negro employees invited him to eat lunch with him and he stated "You go on down and send the elevator back up and I will join you in a few minutes." Before he could finish whatever he was doing, he stated, the commotion surrounding the assassination took place and when he went down stairs, a policeman questioned him as to his identification and his boss stated that "he is one of our employees" whereupon the policeman had him step aside momentarily. Following this, he simply walked out the front door of the building. I don't recall that anyone asked why he left or where or how he went. I just presumed that this had been covered in an earlier questioning.

A. J. HIDELL IDENTIFICATION CARD---Captain Fritz asked him if he knew anyone by the name of A. J. Hidell and he denied that he did. When asked if he had ever used this name as an alias, he also made a denial. In fact, he stated that he had never used the name, didn't know anyone by this name, and never had heard of the name before. Captain Fritz then asked him about the I.D. card he had in his pocket bearing such a name and he flared up and stated "I've told you all I'm going to about that card. You took notes, just read them for yourself, if you want to refresh your memory." He told Captain Fritz that "You have the card. Now you know as much about it as I do."

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About 11:00 a.m. or a few minutes thereafter, someone handed through the door several hangers on which there were some trousers, shirts, and a couple of sweaters. When asked if he wanted to change any of his clothes before being transferred to the County jail, he said "Just give me one of these sweaters." He didn't like the one they handed him and insisted on putting on a black slip-over sweater that had some jagged holes in it near the front of the right shoulder. One cuff was released while he slipped this over the head, following which he was again cuffed. During this change of clothing, Chief of Police Curry came into the room and discussed something in an inaudible undertone with Captain Fritz, apparently for the purpose of not letting Oswald hear what was being said. I have no idea what this conversation was, but just presume they were discussing the transfer of the prisoner. I did not go downstairs to witness the further transfer of the prisoner.

HDHolmes

H. D. HOLMES
Postal Inspector
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